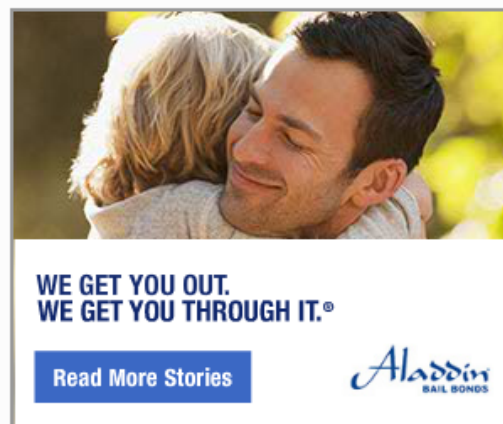
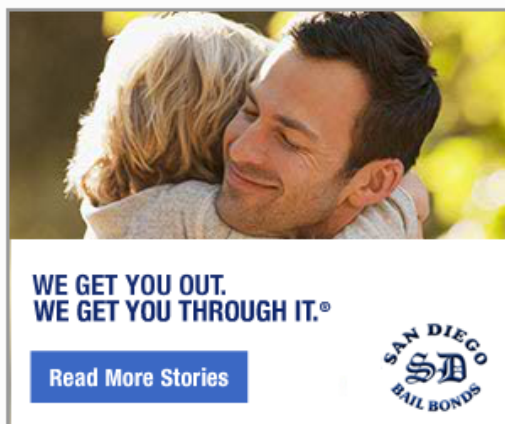


## Unlock the Growth Potential of Your Business with Smart Marketing

Does marketing feel like an expense or an investment for your business? If you immediately thought of it as an expense, then you are not applying Smart Marketing. And you are not alone.

Most small businesses, if they are spending any money on marketing, are wasting it by telling potential customers that they are just like all of their competitors. (And it is not just small businesses!) In most advertising, you could easily substitute the name of a direct competitor and potential customers would be none the wiser.

*Which is the real advertisement?*



Unless you have a big advertising budget, spending money on branding is a waste of money. Instead, you want to apply Smart Marketing that helps you win new customers and makes you memorable to your ideal customer. (And for those who care, it is an ad for Aladdin Bail Bonds, but they clearly do not have any differentiation from other bail bond companies.)

So, let's look at how you can apply Smart Marketing to your business. There are four steps:

### 1) Make Your Marketing Strategic

People are overwhelmed by the thousands of marketing messages they encounter every day. So, the natural human reaction is to tune the messages out. In order to reach customers, you have to get them to tune back in.

Have you ever noticed that when you are looking to buy a car, all of a sudden you see and hear a lot of advertisements for cars? That is because you have tuned back

in. The goal of Smart Marketing is to get your potential customers to tune back in to your message.

### **Clearly Define Your Target Market**

To get potential customers to tune in, you need to be very clear about who you are serving and why. Ideally, you want a target market or specific need that is not being served well by competitors.

Chipotle is a good example of a company that found an unmet need in the fast food category. They identified the desire for healthy, fresh food that is served quickly and is relatively inexpensive. Plus, many of the people who care about fresh food also care about where their food comes from. So, Chipotle spends a lot of time with their supply chain to ensure they are providing sustainably grown produce and ethically raised meat. This differentiation has led them to grow to over 1600 restaurants in just 20 years.

### **Differentiate Your Business**

Once you have defined your target market clearly, it becomes easier to differentiate your business. And to significantly grow your business, you need to look as different as possible from your competitors.

Southwest Airlines is a great example of a company that went after a specific target market (recreational travel to destinations in the Southwest), and then took that differentiation even farther. From the pricing of flights to the boarding process to singing flight attendants, they could not feel more different than other airlines. They have recently taken that even farther with no baggage fees.

Your core differentiator should really matter to your target market. Beyond that, you can find ways to differentiate just to be memorable, and if they also appeal to your target market, all the better.

## **2) Keep It Simple**

Complexity is the enemy of completion for small businesses. Most people are wearing too many hats to implement a complex marketing plan. So, it is important to keep it simple to make sure it gets done.

In addition, there are many different ways you can market your business, such as search engine advertising, Facebook, public relations, email marketing and around fifty other options. There is no way that a small business can take on most of these. The important thing is to choose the marketing channel where you can reach your target market and focus there.

Start with a single channel and optimize it. Once you have it working really well, then you can add another marketing channel. When you keep it simple, you can focus on making each channel work well for you.

### 3) Be Consistent

Too many businesses practice *random acts of marketing*. They hear that Facebook advertising is working well for a business owner they know, so they try it. When that fails (which it often does, because they do not understand why it worked for another business), they move on to a new tactic without ever having a strategy behind their actions. That makes it difficult to be consistent.

If you have a marketing plan in place, and clear reasons why you are taking specific actions, it is much easier to remain consistent. However, that is not always enough. Once you have a marketing plan in place, it is often more effective to delegate the regular work to someone else. That can be someone within your organization or an outside consultant. The point is to make it one of their regular tasks, so that it gets done on a consistent basis.

### 4) Measure Your Results

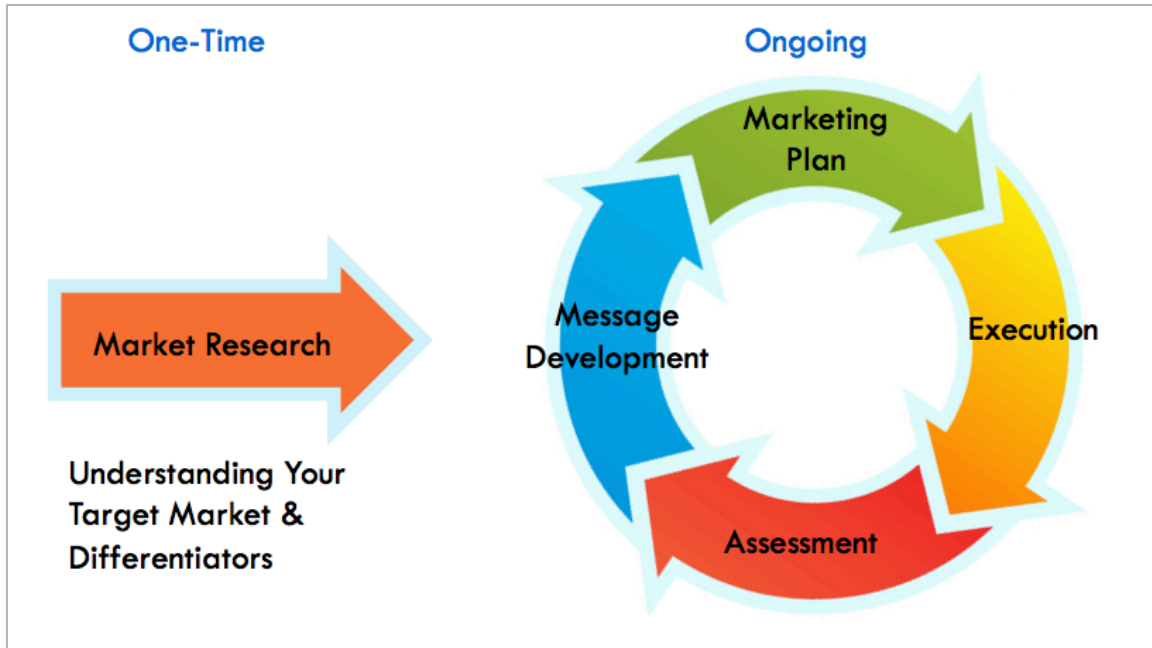
Can you afford to waste 50% or more of your marketing budget? Most small businesses cannot, yet very few have a way of measuring if their marketing efforts are working. Saying things like: “Business picked up while we ran that campaign” can be self-defeating. Sales may have increased because of a change in the marketplace and have nothing to do with your marketing campaign.

So, it is important to plan how you are going to measure any marketing efforts or advertising from the start. Think about how most of your leads or sales will come in. If most are online, that is easy to track. If the sale is generated in person or on the phone, this situation requires a little more planning.

Is there a promotion you can tie into the campaign? That is one major benefit of coupons or free gifts. They allow you to track the source of the campaign that brought in the new customer. However you do it, plan to measure the results of any marketing efforts you undertake.

### The Smart Marketing Process

Below is the process that Factor Four Consulting uses to help businesses apply Smart Marketing. The initial market research helps companies develop a clear message that appeals to their target market. Once the message is developed, the marketing plan is created, marketing campaigns are executed, and results are measured.



By using Smart Marketing, you can make your marketing efforts much more effective.

### About the Author

Jeff Coleman, a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, created Factor Four Consulting to help small businesses achieve better marketing results. Jeff is passionate about helping companies reach their full potential. He is also an instructor at UCSD and USD, and working on a book to educate small businesses about Smart Marketing.

### Applying Smart Marketing to Your Business

Would you like to take the next step towards applying Smart Marketing to your business? If so, we can work with you on an initial target market and differentiation session. This is a simplified version of our full process. The cost is \$250 for a 90-minute session.

After running through the session, you will be much clearer about your target market and how you can differentiate your business in order to get customers more easily. Contact Jeff at (858) 220-0202 to schedule a Smart Marketing session.